THE MOUNTAINEERS AND OTHER POEMS

BY

RICHARD U. CLARK

Author of "Cattivello's Quartetto."

THE MOUNTAINEERS AND OTHER POEMS

BY

RICHARD U. CLARK,

Author of "CATTIVELLO'S QUARTETTO.

PS 1299
C1917M6

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
Two Copies Received
MAY 4 1903
Copyright Entry
Mrac 9-1903
CLASS a XXc. No.
5 4 7 4 6
COPY B.

Copyright 1903. by Richard U. Clark.

PREFACE.

We flit across life's ocean as
A phantom—seen, then lost to view.
Our "airy nothingness" still has
A power for good or ill to do,
In the brief interval that knew
Our passing through.
It is a trifling legacy,
To picture in our rhymes what we
Have dreamt while here.
The preface to eternity is brief—
So this shall be—we pray you, turn the leaf.

THE MOUNTAINEERS.

FIRST INTERVAL.

I.

On a mountain farm in Tennessee
At sunset, midst gorgeous scenery,
On a rustic fence leaned wearily
A youth who seemed lost in revery.
The old barn was built on a plateau,
From which a ravine descended low
Between high ridges, whose peaks, aglow
In the gold and purple sunset, show
Like headlands in a sapphire ocean,
And fleecy clouds with rapid motion
Sailed swiftly by, the boy's thought freighting
O'er seas aerial, undulating,
To castles in Spain and the poet's domain.

II.

The bars were down and the tin milk pail
Carelessly swung from the rustic pale,
As slowly the cows came up the vale
In single file on the well worn trail.
Forests primeval line the hillsides,
Adown which many a brooklet glides,
To lose its flow in the lake below,
About whose marge some tillable fields
Supply all the crops the homestead yields.
A handsome youth is the dreamer there,
As the breeze toys with his raven hair;
Tall, strong and ruddy, fitted to bear
His part in life's battle anywhere.
Then why standeth he there listlessly?

III.

Mon ami, look back in your career;
Can you recall through many a year
When in early life you felt a tear
On your cheek? "Must I live and die here?"
Was the pressure forced it from your heart
That intense longing for broader part
Than seemed to you was possible there?
If so, you may share in the despair
Apparent in him who standeth there;
As, back to earth from castles in air,
He condescended to milk the cows,
Then drove them out, all the night to browse;
Put up the bars and took his way home—
That's a dismal pass in life, let us own.

IV.

Yet one that to youth comes frequently,
Buried as he is in obscurity,
And who shall decide if wiser he
Who rushes forth or who patiently
Awaiteth the hour of destiny.
For ancient proverbs in this agree,
"To him who sleepeth arrive in time
The fortunes, the fates to him assign."
Sauntering slowly, with pail in hand,
He came to the cottage where now stand.
Hand in hand, his brother, with bride
Of a month, young, fresh, fair and mild eyed,
Who takes the pail and, with housewife's care,
Proceeds to arrange their evening fare.

V.

Oh! youth of ambitions for renown
Try not, oh! fledgling, the wings of down.
The way is long, there multitudes throng,
Hot fevered and battling their way on
To a goal that is but rarely won.
With strength and courage and truth, youth may
Die in despair on that long highway,
For youth forgets the need to prepare
For the cruel tests of forces there,
And goes forth trusting to hope alone.
What wonder thousands bewail and moan
The day that ever they left their home.
Go cool that fever and wait for time;
Study and toil, with patience sublime,
To temper thy steel till chilled and keen,
Thy muscles hardened with strength unseen.
Then in after years go out and test
Thy forces and merit with the best.

VI.

Alas! that the siren hope should sing
So luringly in the ear of youth,
And none be near, like Ithaca's King,
That ear to seal with the wax of truth.
Oh! the rocks, the whirlpools that beset
The isles whereon the sirens display
Their charms and conceal the bones still wet
Of victims that round about them lay.
Oh! golden hours of untempted youth,
When the heart deems life all simple truth
And all that glistens is purest gold.
For you may the future surely hold
A providence, your mentor to be.

VII.

We reach a point where we may explain
Whence evoluted and from what strain
These brothers came; midst the hills of Maine
Their mother taught school in early life,
Later became a lumberman's wife.
A giant in strength, he loved her well,
Could happier lot to her have fell?
She longed for a home 'neath milder skies,
And in Tennessee sought paradise;
There to build a nest midst mountain peaks
Where to simple folk great nature speaks.
The axe of the lumberman from Maine
Soon reared a cot, on its hearth a flame,
And an earthly home sprang into birth.
Oh, what a theme in "the homes of earth!"
Therein she reared her loved eaglets two,
Whom we introduce this eve to you.

VIII.

The young wife's eyes rest oft inquiringly
Upon the youth sitting so pensively,
As though within him lay some novelty
Of manner or expression she could see.
He, when the meal was o'er, said suddenly:—
"Our last joint meal for years, perhaps forever;
Here's not enough for all of us together,
And I am going out alone to-night
To seek my fortunes, be they dark or bright.
Here, Kitty, is a deed to all I own
On, of or in this quiet mountain home,
And if I never more again should come,
Know that I loved you both." Then he went forth alone,
And to his mother's grave he made his way,

And o'er her, sleeping in the clay, did pray
That she would pray for him there as he prayed.
Behind him crept his dog, and his head laid
Upon his knee, begging that he
Might bear him company
And his protector be.
That mute appeal of love unlocked the tears,
The last that he should shed for many years.
'Twas fitting that all weakness be left there;
Ring down the curtain on him wrapt in prayer.

IX.

The wheel of time, like Ixion's, rolls on,
And man thereon is bound and cannot stay
Its flight toward events that wait upon
His course. Well, the old poets in their day
Saw each life chiselled out of human clay
By the great Sculptor in whose hand thy breath
Is held until withdrawn, and that is death;
No two alike, all creatures of a day,
That's all too brief when longest here we stay
And play the role assigned us on life's stage.
How few will leave a name on history's page—
The mass of men Scripture hath thus described:—
"He lived, he begot children, and he died."

X.

And so it was upon that mountain side
As fled the years, fair children multiplied.
And if they brought with them a fond delight
To the parental heart, and made more bright
Their home—they also brought anxieties
That on the parents' hearts and on the brow
Grave furrows, like the deep wounds of the plough
On Mother Earth's fair breast, and banish ease.
With every child come new capacities
To suffer or enjoy, unequally—
Alas, too often sorrow turns the scale
And in too many homes the clouds prevail.
What wonder then if faded from their view
Their absent brother, who bade them adieu
Just twenty years ago, of whom no word
Have they in all those weary long years heard.
Let us look in upon that home to-night
And paint the picture opens to our sight.

XI.

The farmer's toil, the housewife's drudgery
Have bent their forms and aged perceptibly.
The rounded cheeks of Kitty we once saw
Are flattened now, the muscles tightly draw
About her mouth, and all her features tell
Of an heroic effort performed well
Her house to keep, her little ones to rear
And then to educate, cost struggle dear;
Such wondrous effort must to all be clear.
She sits there sewing by a tallow dip.
Few idle moments e'er her fingers know.
The father opposite with pipe at lip
In silence gazes at the log whose glow
Some reinforcement to the light affords.

The children's silent game well with the scene accords.
Two shaggy hounds are stretched before the fire;
A silent scene, the lights must flame still higher.
A knocking at the door the dogs awake
And growling, at the threshold their stand make.

XII.

Dogs are intelligent to a degree
That seems incredible, and more than we,
They know the motive that impels a knock,
And this knock seemed to them of hostile stock.
"Charge, Prince! Down, Bruno!" cried the farmer, when
He slid the bolts and held the door open.
"Good evening," said a voice, and from the night
Entered a man who seemed not o'er polite,
For as he took the farmer's vacant chair
He said, "Your light is something dim." Despair
Seized on the farmer, for this surly dun
He knew had come his debt to preach upon.
The children, like the flowers when comes a frost,
Wilted, withdrew, and Kitty quickly tossed
Her sewing in a basket and retired;
She knew precisely what that call inspired.

XIII.

The farmer brought out pipes, tobacco, too,
And from the cask a jug of cider drew.
Bidding his guest to make himself at home.
"Thank you," the man replied; "I came, I own,
Upon a cruel errand—yet we may
Make ourselves easy while I have my say.
"Have you that interest?" "No, not quite all yet,
But when I sell my corn I shall it get."
"Your corn? Dear me! You're good at an excuse
When money is to pay, but are profuse
In hospitalities; you waste your means.
'Twere better pay your debts, to me it seems."
"I owe you nothing save this last half year,
And interest upon interest always pay
For such extensions, as in this case here,
When I have made you wait beyond the day."
"I don't like be made wait—will wait no more."
Just then another knock upon the door,
Entered a man, whom, when the farmer spied,
"My brother Dick!" and his arms opened wide.
"Dear boy, thank God you come again to me!
Come, boys; come, girls," he shouted; "Come, Kitty;
"Here's Dick come back; my thanks, O God, to thee!"
And high he piled the logs that into flame
Soon burst, a warmer welcome to proclaim.

XIV.

Then all save one came running to embrace
A handsome man, well dressed, of ease and grace,
Like and unlike their father, save the face,
Unwrinkled and untanned, was fair and smooth.
Him sight of Kitty deeply seemed to move.
He clasped her in his arms all tenderly
And kissed her brow, while floods of memory
Swept o'er his heart, recalled his childhood's days.
In Kitty he could see his mother's ways.
She then presented her three sturdy boys—
Paul, George and Arthur—and she gently toys
With the small hand of her young daughter, Lois.
She next presents her daughter Bella, dear,
When a sad face among them did appear—
A tall, frail maiden, with great, lustrous eyes
And white, thin cheeks. "And who is this?" he cries;
"This lily that seems pining for the sun?
Ne'er saw I face more fair to look upon."
"This is our Edith; she hath drooped of late—
Dear child, we soon with bloom those cheeks will freight."
She tried to smile, but ended with a sigh;
As she withdrew they heard a smothered cry.

XV.

"And this man, who is he, my brother, say,
Who sits and gazes in no pleasant way
On this my glad return—who seems to own
Some power to mar your comfort in your home?
I overheard some words e'er I came in
That made my blood to boil. Let me begin.
It seems, sir, that my brother's in your debt;
How vast the sum can cause you to forget
That deep respect due man in his own home
And would affront him before all his own?
That would begrudge his evening hours of rest,
And with unwelcomed presence would infest
His very fireside, like a deadly pest.
Name, sir, the sum my brother owes to you!"
And from his coat a well filled wallet drew.
"Write a receipt—now go, sir; get you home,
And never venture here again to come."
The old man took his hat and stick, then turned
And menacingly shook it. "You have spurned
Me from this door; it shall be his no more.
To-morrow a foreclosure shall begin—
I will eject both you and all your kin."

XVI.

Adown the mountain road in darkness he,
With rage and disappointment in his breast,
Betook his way cursing the fates' decree
That rescued from his purpose this distressed
Yet well deserving modest family.
He had wrecked Edith's happiness in vain
And lost her just when he seemed sure to gain.
This wizened miser with a lustful eye
Had coveted fair Edith for his own.
He hoped the father's influence to buy
When he that victim should have prostrate thrown,
And Edith's sacrifice should save their home.
This very pretty plot he had devised;
It had miscarried, he had lost the prized.

XVII.

It was his work, her face was white and thin
And that her lips now only spoke in sighs.
Almost to murder had he pushed his sin.
Her lover he had stolen by base lies,
And she, too proud to live and bear chagrin,
Like a frail flower touched by an icy breath,
Pining for love, resigned herself to death.
Her sad pale face now haunted him, and fear
Lent voices to the trees and shrubs thereby,
And darkness clothed them till they did appear
Grotesque marauders, waiting him to spy.
Now as he quickened pace three men drew near
And threw their arms about him, in his ear
"Your money or your life"—and then did disappear,
Leaving him prostrate in the roadway, dead.

XVIII.

He won't be greatly missed in Tennessee,
Nor prove an acquisition elsewhere, we
May still here moralize quite properly.
The lawyers and the heirs will eagerly
Divide the contents of his treasury;
God grant they use it better than did he.
Good friend, pray kindly to decide rightly
Whether in this world is the wiser he
Who never loses opportunity
Or who forgoes advantage purposely?
Had he forborn to push advantage, then
An opportunity had come again,
Pray, think it out at any moment when
You feel inclined—good counsel you may find,
And let his taking off impress the thought,
Pushing advantage disadvantage brought.

XIX.

And now the silent flakes began to fall,
The victim to enshroud in spotless white,
As though "the Righter of all wrongs" did call
His noiseless messenger to act this night.
His double purpose, first to veil the dead
And then to show the tracks at morning's light,
And whither the assassins thence had fled.
His purpose and performance never fail,
And with the hanging of these men in jail,
We shift the scenes of this dramatic tale.

SECOND INTERVAL.

I.

At morn the brothers stood by the old barn,
That showed the ravages the years had wrought;
Then Dick's eyes rested on the silent tarn,
And soon his glance a new expression caught.
Where, William, where the woods that used to climb
Up to the summits of those towering peaks?
With conscious pride he said:—"These arms of mine
They felled them, and their absence surely speaks
Of my life's work. What record can you show
To match this monument of industry?"
Laughing Dick answered, "Really, I don't know
If in some iron safe there still may be
Monuments of my old Caligraphy,
Books of account, cheques, drafts or letters, for
I over such for many a year did pore.
Affairs commercial all end finally
In liquidations or in bankruptcy,
And the receiver or the assignee
Sells the old books to realize his fee;
So the life records of the clerks there wrought
Are ground to pulp by those the books have bought.
Like ocean's vapors that return as rain,
The pulp returns to paper yet again.
If naught survives my labors to attest
In their results, I have indeed been blest."

II.

Just then the sun shone forth from the white mist
Upon the whiter snow the hillsides wore;
That, being by his warm breath softly kissed,
Exchanged for rainbow tears its crystals hoar.
And fair green pastures now appeared to view
Full to the summits of those lofty peaks;
In lovely contrast to the sky's deep blue,
All nature smiled as thus the wanderer speaks:—

III.

"Let the white blanket that has disappeared
Fittingly typify the years since we
Last parted—and this green, to us endeared,
Be the bright future we shall joy to see.
Yet think not, brother, that through all these years
I left you unobserved; I monthly knew
Of what was passing here. It now appears
That my informant most observant grew,
And summoned me to you, I trust in time
To save your daughter Edith from decline.
'The blights that press the life from out young hearts'
Weigh heavy upon her; you must resign
Her to my care. Perchance in foreign parts
The rose on those white cheeks may bloom again."

IV.

Kitty, with Edith, now came on the scene,
The latter pale, with languid pace, clung tight
To mother's arm, shrinking from being seen;
Emotionless, as if she no delight
Took in the wanderer's return, nor shared
Her parent's joy. He took her thin white hand
Within his own and both their palms compared,
Awhile in silence he minutely scanned
The line of life, its crossings and their size,
And then he gently said, "Show me your eyes."
So she, thus taken by this quick surprise,
Lifted the lids whose long black lashes veiled
Those glorious orbs, and with a glance regaled
His own, and then again the ebon fringes fell
And left their shadow on the sunken cheek.

V.

"It is as I supposed, my child; your eyes
Are introverted and see naught beside
Internal fancies. Oft delusions rise
From introverted eyes—introspection,
Too prolonged, full oft begets dejection.
It's somewhat tedious treating and we may
Begin at once—your hand again, I pray."

VI.

Fairly bewildered, she promptly complied.
"Now, shut your eyes—there's a great world outside
That you must see," and from his pocket drew
A diamond ring, sparkling with every hue—
Blue, green and purple, red and yellow fused—
And placed it on her finger. All confused
She ope'd her eyes, and at the dazzling sight
With girlish frankness uttered her delight.
"How beautiful! See, father, mother, see
This sparkling gem uncle has brought to me.
Upon this hand never was ring before,
Save once when mother's wedding ring I wore."

VII.

Then, as if she had slyly been betrayed
To wander from her grief, stood quite dismayed;
Yet the gem's brightness and its purity
So greatly vexed her curiosity
That, though she closed her eyes her grief to woo,
They still must open for another view;
For, like the fair Fastrada's ring, therein
A spell as irresistible did dwell.
She wondered if he laughed within to see
The vacillation she perceived obtained;
And he, rejoicing at his strategy,
Felt that some progress was already gained.
Oh, fateful turning of the tides of life!
What saint in heav'n interpellation made?
What soul on earth in love for us hath prayed?
What wondrous spell to save us been displayed?
That the mysterious force that urged repels,
And the black fiat for our death cancels.
And silently subside the dreaded swells

VIII.

Perhaps, good reader, you incline to doubt
That such a power within the diamond dwells.
By just one trial you may find it out.
Try how the widow's, orphan's grief it quells,
Its metaphysic forces will appear.
Still further to impress you we will add
Some brief reflection on its waters clear,
And why its fires should make the sad heart glad.
All diamonds are tears solidified,
And all the tears the human race has shed
Entombed within earth's diamonds survived
To purify us as they did the dead,
Who once them shed and whom they comforted.
Let me here quote an old authority
That this conceit sustains undoubtedly:—
"Within a bottle He has put my tears;
He counts and treasures them throughout the years."
Behold, within this flashing tearful gem
Survive those treasured tears. Oh, look on them!
These resurrected tears that flash with light
Rejoice man's heart—appealing through his sight.

IX.

The uncle, having put his scheme in play,
Pursued his programme without more delay.
Turning to Kitty, here, my dear, for you,
Is much the same prescription, and he drew
Two lovely solitaires from a jewel case;
Let me with these those coral rings replace,
And let me hang this cross upon your breast—
Not purer than the virtues there find rest.
And having fastened round her neck the chain,
He handed her a mirror—not in vain
This reinforcement of his subtlety.

X.

Had Faust omitted from his jewel case
The mirror wherein Marguerite's sweet face
First saw its loveliness increased by theirs,
She had not fallen in the tempter's snares,
And Gounod's jewel song had ne'er been sung;
So on this mirror many hopes he hung.

XI.

Like Marguerite, until the mirror true
Showed her irradiate with gems that grew
Bright and more brilliant every way she turned,
Kitty had not their value fully learned;
But when she saw how wondrous is the grace
Their fires impart to any woman's face,
Around her husband's neck she threw her arms,
Upraised her face to his, to test their charms.

XII.

And he to her:—My dear, I greatly fear
These for our simple home are much too fine;
Then if you like them not, I will decline
Our brother's gift; perhaps they ill accord
With simple me, and woman's tears outpoured;
While Edith would have broken down complete
Had not the sound of wheels and horses' feet
Drawn their attention to the country road.
Some one has lost his way the farmer said;
Not so my brother, as the team on sped,
That is a gift for you. We yesterday
Had come so many miles upon our way,
I left them at the town and came ahead,
By my impatience being surely led,
To reach your door just at a happy time.

XIII.

He who hath crossed the seas and watched the wave
Uplift his bark, then rush it wildly on,
Hath fancied that an equine phalanx gave
Its mighty force thus, thus to bear him on,
'Tis said, that Neptune gave the horse to man;
And rushing waves with horses well compare,
And no comparison we know of can
Like them attest the kinship that they share.
All silently the farmer watched their stride,
As moving onward at a rapid pace,
Their long tails on the breeze, outspreading wide,
Their forms of symmetry and matchless grace,
Their shining harnesses, and silver mountings
And the luxurious carriage that they drew
Were all expressive of vast cost—accountings,
That in his mind to thousands quickly grew.
Few objects draw a farmer's admiration
Like handsome horses spirited and kind;
He, now indulging in an exclamation
Of his admiration, thus freed his mind:—

XIV.

Too grand, too great, too beautiful appear
Your gifts upon or for a mountaineer.
Do you own gold mines, brother, that you shower
In such profusion these so costly gifts.
Where did you pluck this magic wand of power
That you so far above us all uplifts?

XV.

Say not uplifted o'er us, but before us,
For I am come again to share with you.
A youth like David unarmed, unattended,
I went forth to the battle as did he;
And the same God hath also me befriended,
And given the great spoil I bring with me.
It is His gift, not mine; you can't refuse it,
And for your happiness He bids you use it.

XVI.

Oh, what is life but an enforced performance?
An obbligato—to the supreme will,
That appoints smiles or tears, and our conformance
Must meet the measure be it good or ill.
How pleasant 'tis to meet with such surprises
After long years of strict economies.
As on the farmer shone through these devices,
Showing him glimpses of a life of ease.—

XVII.

The carriage now arrived well filled with packs,
Which soon were carried to the farmer's door;
And then ensued a scene would greatly tax
A male imagination well to draw,
And being drawn, to some might seem a bore;

That there were lingerie and gloves and hats,
Shoes, hosiery and several new dresses,
Will briefly outline to you, all the facts
And several stanzas into lines compresses.
Now, when the ladies' Ohs! and Ahs! were ended,
Each garment been examined o'er and o'er,
The donor said if aught must be amended
'T were well it were found out to-day before
We leave this evening on our little journey.
I pray you, therefore, have a dress rehearsal,
Give me the pleasure to be first to see
If your good doctor may have made reversal
In measurements of either sent to me.

XVIII.

'T was just as they descended so apparelled,
The farmer entering saw them on the stair;
And at the vision of this double barrelled
Toilette surprise—it took him unaware;
And catching Kitty in his arms he kissed her
And said, Dear love, you are grown wondrous fair.
She, greatly pleased that so her face could stir
Emotions of such depth—where they were rare—
Returned his warm caress, and stepped aside
That Edith might descend, whom, when he spied,
He caught her in his arms and fairly wept:—
Oh, my dear child, how like a star at night
Blazing with light thou fillest with delight
Thy father's heart.

XIX.

Two kneeling women in a sleeping car
Addressed their nightly prayer to Deity,
As, rushing on, the train bore them afar
From those for whom they prayed so fervently.
Bewildered with the day's excitements, they,
Locked in each other's arms on that strange bed,
Lived o'er the graphic scenes of that long day
And wooed for slumbers that would not be wed.
Edith in thought essayed to steal away,
Back to her fatal thirst for tears and sighs.
The ring—the new apparel—now held sway
And stopped the introvertion of her eyes—
Then k'leidoscopic dreams enveloped her.

XX.

The uncle elsewhere thus soliloquized:—
A heavy dose no doubt for the first day,
Yet each ingredient was well devised,
And each is surely working in its way.
The morrow's journey on the train will calm
The mind, perchance, too highly fed to-day;
And music with gay scenes will lend a charm
This feverish excitement to allay,
And afterward the unreposing ocean
Will waken in her soul some new emotion.

XXI.

Soothing through piny woods it is to glide,
With folded hands in idleness to bide,
And let the eye drink in the wealth of green
That in profusion marks the sylvan scene
Which lines the route to fair St. Augustine.
There, all undaunted by the sombre shade
The interwoven pine tree tops have made,
Palms, ferns and lilies have themselves arrayed,
Each in its own peculiar vestment dressed,
To serve within this temple as may best
Reflect the glory of its architect.
What choirs of spectral vestals here may pass,
With Druid prophets nightly there to view,
If ancient prophecies they in the mass
Ages agone foretold, have yet come true.
In these dim aisles how fast our fancies flit.
Herein the fierce red Seminoles have lit
Their altar fires, whose smoke they thought would freight
Their prayers to the Great Spirit and placate
The Mighty Power they knew controls all men.
Beyond these dark woods verdant everglades
Refresh the eyes o'erwearied of the shades,
As the bright sun dances upon the waves,
And warmth and color all the scene pervades.
The rustling rushes, waving to the breeze,
Whisper King Midas' secret—pleasantries
Of sprites, and water nymphs, and fairy dells
And Tritons with their trumpets made of shells;
And then again miles upon miles of pines,
Where one to slumber soon himself resigns.
Our mountaineers thus all that day reposed,
Until, as evening shades about them closed,
Like a celestial city on their sight
Burst towers and minarets—electric light
Proclaimed their journey ended—Flagler's dream.
They saw in all its radiance extreme.

XXII.

Never before upon our mountaineers
Had such a beauteous vision cast its spell—
A Moorish palace its high towers uprears,
Built from the ocean's gray coquina shell,
With balconies, verandas and arcades
Ablaze with light, while over all the moon,
With its enchantment, every nook invades,
Gilding the scene with its fair golden bloom.
The sparkling fountains glistened in its light,
And flowers bloomed on, as though it were not night.
Oh, dream of interwoven harmonies,
Wherein one sees De Leon crossing seas
To reach the spot, where he conceived did play
The fountain of eternal youth, where they—
The heavy hearted and the old or sad—
Might plunge and be new made, and so be glad.
Crossing the portal, on their ears there fell
The strains of music irresistible;
Fair dames and radiant maidens, richly dressed,
And merry children's laughter did invest
The scene with youth's bright charm and happiness.
Here all was joy and gladness, mirth, content,
And Edith yielded to its blandishment.
Leaning upon her uncle's arm, she went
From room to room throughout the whole extent
Of gayety and pleasure there prevailed
And showed him that she was by them regaled.

Edith had spoken little hitherto,
But these bright scenes of joy and animation
Through her young blood soon their infection threw.
And with her uncle now her conversation
Became quite animated, and she drew
Such pictures from her new and first impressions
He could not doubt his plan was proving true
And would yet free her from her long dejections.
At length she said:—"Let us go out again
Into the court and watch the fountains play.
Their falling waters soothe me as does rain.
How weird the moonlight on that feathery spray!
This is a night for dreams—a night as fair as day."

XXIII.

Mete for a land of dreams, her uncle said,
De Leon to it came, by a dream led,
And died bequeathing unto men his dream
Of such pure light and radiance extreme.
And Flagler's dream perhaps as strange will seem.
Entwined in these gray walls, will dreams and names
Ages survive—commingled be their fames.
Barbaric splendor and romance of Spain,
His wealth, like magic, on this sandy plain
Hath bidden rise again and us to entertain.
All men come hither, led by force of dreams
Of health, of rest, of sunshine—all catch gleams
Of happiness and pleasures that seem sweet,
And all depart with dreams still incomplete.

XXIV.

"Uncle, is this your home—do you live here
And see these joyous scenes throughout the year?"
"This is my home, dear child, while I am here;
Another on the morrow may appear.
Home is a place that to the normal man
Speaks with an emphasis none other can.
He finds his pleasure in its limitation,
And there indulges all his inclination;
But for the beggar and the millionnaire
Home is not local—home is everywhere;
They with the normal man in little share—
In their extremes from him they equal are.
The heights of wealth, the depths of poverty
Are equidistant from normality
As tallest mountain and the deepest sea
From the sea's level measure equally;
The two extremes meet in their liberty.
Imagine, please, that we have taken flight
Within an airship—where'er we alight
My homes will offer you some new delight."

XXV.

The millionnaire, when he had said good night,
Lit a cigar and paced the corridor,
Where the weird moonbeams still played on the floor,
Though now deserted by the throngs so bright
Which there had circled but an hour before,
And thus his musings ran their airy flight:—
"So far all's well; to-morrow by the sea
Will further test my plan's efficiency.
'Twill be high water on the bar at three,
When my good yacht is certain there to be,
And I will time our visit for that hour,
Trusting in ocean to exert its power;
And if I know the human heart at all
She will not fail to answer to its call."

XXVI.

The day was warm, the sky a glorious blue;
The sun, now past the noon, its full glare threw
Upon the tall white tower, sits by the sea,
With broad black belt encircled spirally.
On Anastasia Island, where the sand
In dunes of many forms, the winters' storms
Invading far the beach on giant waves,
Left there to mark how far the sea invades
The shelving beach, whereon is built the tower;
And hither Edith came at such an hour.
Turning the tower, before her suddenly
She saw the ocean—in its majesty.

XXVII.

An "Oh!" as if of terror, crossed her lips;
Those lustrous eyes were riveted afar,
Where the blue sky into the ocean dips,
And both alike are dyed—save on that bar
Where "carded wool" forever crests the wave
With that white mass of foam—that never dies,
But signals danger, mariners to save.

XXVIII.

In nature's solemn spectacle a scene
That agitates the soul—as those grand billows roll;
A solitude complete, where we no actors greet,
While ceaselessly is sounding night and day
By ocean's solemn surges, sung alway,
Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty,
An intermezzo—'twixt God's two act play,
Creation and translation, "No more sea,"
Must first have sounded ere that harmony
Shall thenceforth be re-echoed ceaselessly
In its Gregorian solemnity
Above a sea of glass and by another class
Of God's creation in eternity,
As the beloved Disciple well hath sung.

XXIX.

There Edith, wrapt in thought, gazed mutely on
The rolling billows, with their haughty crests,
As rank on rank they hurled themselves upon
The thirsty sands and, vanquished, find their rests.
Then thus to her emotion she gave voice:—
"How like the mountains seems the sea to me!
Its solitude is like our lofty peaks;
And, like a friend's voice known from infancy,
In its deep roar a welcome to me speaks.
Uncle, I dreamed last night that we two strayed
In a dark wood's impenetrable shade,
And that I lost my way; then, all dismayed,
For guidance safely home I knelt and prayed.

And when I rose the small indenture made
By kneeling there held water, pure and clear,
That soon began to bubble, then to rear
A fount of water. Then a geyser grew
That all about me its vast torrents threw,
Hot and sulphurous as it rose from hell,
Then icy cold as it returning fell—
Parboiled my flesh an instant, and then chilled,
With alternating pain and pleasure thrilled.
And then a thirst possessed me till it seemed
That I must drink or die—when suddenly
A great white veil descended over me—
A filmy gossamer impervious—
Held by some mighty power mysterious;
And then on this a radiant rainbow threw
In rapid alternation every hue—
Blue, green and yellow, red and purple rays—
While all around me still the water plays.
And then a voice, like music to my ear,
Would'est thou drink the waters, pure and clear,
From out the fountain of eternal life?
Go, listen to the voices of the sea,
And heed the message that they bear to thee;
And now these surges woo me to depart,
As if their surging would allay my pain.
Rocked on those billows I might know again
My childhood's peace and pleasure in my heart.
Would that to other lands I might now pass,
With every mile attenuate the chain
That binds me to the past, till it would break at last
And I forevermore be free from pain."

XXX.

She ceased, and ocean echoed the refrain,
"And I forevermore be free from pain."
Alas! how through the Chain of Centuries
Ocean has echoed such soliloquies,
The penalties of Love's idolatries,
Calypso on Ogygia's rockbound shores,
In vain Ulysses to detain implores—
Temptingly offers immortality,
And with her love to share her sovereignty.
And there, lamenting that she is immortal,
Is left abandoned by this beloved mortal.
She would have welcomed death's release from pain
Rather than without him, unloved, remain.

XXXI.

See Queenly Dido in her loveliness
Upon the sands bewailing her distress,
As her heart's idol leaves her desolate
And sails away to found a greater State.
Æneas, thou hast left me to my fate.
Upon thine altar I will immolate
Myself, my country and my dynasty,
And Carthage in her ashes shall entomb
Queen Dido, who through thee came to her doom.
Mounting the pyre, she consecrates in flame
Her deathless love and her undying name.

XXXII.

And Sappho's sad song soundeth sweetly still,
As sunset's softest tints o'erspread the sea,
Laving the base of that steep, beetling hill
From whence she sprang to end her misery:—
"Farewell, O Phaon! Here I end my pain
And thy neglect! Oh, thou I idolized,
Perchance my songs the greater fame will gain,
And thou too late shalt learn the worth despised!
Behold, this fleecy veil I fling away
Floats downward like a cloud on the soft air!
Lo! all my wealth of tresses I display;
The braids unweave that bind my golden hair
And these rich sandals that did shield my feet,
I need them not life's journey to complete.
See this white tunic my gemmed girdle binds,
And this soft drapery that it confines!
All—all—I cast them from me on the winds
And part with all save my humanity.
As Aphrodite issued from the sea,
Therein I plunge and veil my nudity;
Perchance on ocean's floor some pearly shell
May be my resting place. Phaon, farewell!"

XXXIII.

Yet, sadder far than all of these appears
Sweet Ariadnes's bitter flood of tears,
When, wakening from her dreams o'er the blue sea,
She sees her lover and companions flee,
Leaving her there alone to grieve and die.
No wonder that her agonizing cry
Reached the keen ears of Jupiter on high,
Who in compassion unto Venus said:—
"Descend to earth; let her be comforted.
With crown of gold and immortality
Will I repay this present misery."
So Edith's uncle, with his pitying heart,
Essayed to play the Providential part.

XXXIV.

Our fair young mountaineer, whom we have posed
Thus in a classical juxtaposition
To the great persons whose careers so closed,
Like them had reached a critical condition,
And whether life or death would now prevail
Seemed equally a matter of conjecture.
True, she was younger far, yet far more frail,
And youth gains daily some new strength of texture.
Then, too, she had a loving scientist,
Backed by his millions and determination,
Who, in his line of treatment, would persist
Until he could perceive amelioration.
Well had he counted on the heaving sea
To work upheaval of complete stagnation,

And well repaid was he thus suddenly
To catch a glimpse of dawning inclination.
This one expression that her pain might cease
Seemed to imply a hope for pain's surcease.
If in his school of practice they relied on prayer,
No doubt he prayed for her while they were standing there;
For certes in the universe no place
More fitting to address the Throne of Grace.

XXXV.

He did not answer her immediately.
His eyes and thoughts seemed all engrossed upon
Some undecipherable entity
There floating vaguely on the horizon,
For which he had been waiting eagerly.
At length he said:—"Pray, let me test your eyes.
Can you see aught there where the sea and sky
Seem interfused—out of the ocean rise?"
And she, long gazing, questioned for reply,
"Something that like a shadow comes and dies?"
"Yes, dear; that shadow comes from puffs of smoke
Seen as some vessel rises on a wave,
Lost as it sinks behind the wave that broke.
Edith, a moment since you longed to go
Far o'er the sea and find relief from pain;
And some good Genii, having heard your woe,
Sends you his barque to bear you o'er the main."

XXXVI.

Up from the underworld on ocean's blue
A fairy boat came rapidly to view;
White as the billows' foam, it rose and fell,
A seeming plaything on the ocean's swell.
Across the intervening waves they saw
Each mast its dress of brilliant bunting wore;
Along its smooth white sides a golden band
Emblemed a ring, the gift of loving hand.
Swift toward the bar its course, both straight and true,
It like a sea gull did its flight pursue.
Lo! now it stops, and a hoarse blast is blown,
A signal to the pilot's ears well known;
He climbs the side, assumes the wheel to steer;
Slowly they move, and now the bar they clear.
The bright Matanzas River they ascend,
And, dropping anchor there, orders attend.
So Edith passeth seaward from our view,
And with fond prayers we whisper our adieu.
May time and change of scene and loving care
Heal the deep wounds of love that she doth bear.

SIR WALTER AND FELICIA

I long to hang upon the walls of time
A picture painted in a poet's rhyme,
Of two loved poets whom the world reveres,
And whom the picture yet the more endears.

They stood before the outer gate
To Abbotsford's high walls;
There silently they contemplate
The hills, dales, waterfalls,
The vast domain of Huntly-burn,
Where cattle grazed and heather bloomed,
To which she would no more return,
But which her presence had perfumed.

He holding there her soft white hand,
Thus spoke at length to her:—
An impulse I cannot withstand
Prompts me this to aver.
Never with such reluctance I
Said farewell to a guest.
Thy presence here delights my eye;
Thy voice with charm is blest,
Whose witchery will faithfully
Be treasured in my breast.
Would thou hadst been one of my kin
That we might never part,
That we new poems might begin,
To cheer the human heart.

Her depth of soul shone in her glance,
And o'er that lovely countenance
Flitted angelic smile awhile
That thrilled him with its radiance
As her reply found utterance.

Only with blessings, can I e'er repay
The hospitalities and sympathies,
And the kind words I hear to-day
Shall live as holy memories
Of these delightful scenes and halcyon days.
It is a joy that we two should have met,
Though like a stream we part in separate ways;
Yet this bright meeeting can we ne'er forget
Where we have intertwined our wreaths of bays.

While the world lasts 'twill treasure and enjoy
The wealth of lays and romance here created,
And for its happiness by thee donated
Each generation will more hours employ
In all that thou hast with such charm related.
Only from out these fascinating scenes
That nature with such lavish hand here spreads,
All capped by thee with such artistic means,
Could issue such array of crowned heads,
Of lords and ladies, and such valiant knights
As thou hast pictured in their tourney fights,
With lance in rest spurring 'neath helm and plume
Onward to win renown or meet their doom.
Their noble steeds and their devoted hounds
Course o'er these hills, their echo here resounds.
All here have fitting home—yet chivalry
Produced no flower, Sir Walter, like to thee.

Indeed, fair friend, take thine own words from me,
While the world lasts 'twill treasure equally
The pearls that thou hast strung;
Those flowers of thought, perfumed with melody,
Each one exhaling saintlike purity
And woman's love and faith in Deity;
Her heroism and her constancy.
All that is noblest in thy poetry
Speaks to the soul and reinforces faith;
And wheresoe'er her flag England shall plant,
There every home to thee a place will grant.
When the vast forests of the rocking pines
In far America give place to shrines
And happy homes, mothers shall read thy lines
To their young children, of that wintry day
The Pilgrim Fathers landed from whom they
Have grown a mighty tree that fills the land.
Lowly he bent him o'er that trembling hand
And with his lips paid reverential kiss.

And she departed—never from that hour
Knew he the fulness of his former power.
His old light heartedness with her had flown;
This plant so sensitive was left alone.
The occult flames of vital energy
Had reached the limit of their brilliancy
And daily paled in their intensity
For three sad years when death removed the light.

ABOU MIDJAN.

Abou Midjan was a noted man,
A chief in the tribe of Irakan,
Who, if at home or on Caravan,
Light hearted would laugh and often sang;
Which was an offence in a Mussulman:
And although none was braver there than he,
Or could manage his steed so dextrously,
They scorned him as lacking that dignity,
In the Prophet's followers one should see.

One eve having drank of the fruit of the vine,
He loudly sang this song to the wine:—

The dew, the mist, and the drenching rain
Kissed thee, oh, vine, on the sandy plain;
The moon, the stars and the sun's hot rays
Wooed thee in turn through the summer's days;
Then autumn's crystals of frost embraced
The luscious grapes, and the wine I taste
Gushed forth to gladden the hearts of men.
Good wine, of thee will I drink again,
And the glow of thy presence while coursing slow
To the smallest pulse in my being shall flow.

Now it chanced grim Saad was riding by
With his staff, their sentry's watch to try,
When to his ears came the singer's strain,
And his wrath he scarcely could contain
As the singer went on with his song again.

The vine—the vine—when I am dead,
Oh plant it surely o'er my head.
I know its roots will pierce the gloom
And reach me lying in the tomb,
And with its life I shall resume
Enjoyment in its sweet perfume;
Through its green leaves and branches I
Shall know the sun still shines on high,
For the root, the branch and the vine are one;
There at peace I shall rest till death's winter is done.

Into the tent burst Saad and said,
The curse of the Prophet be on thy head,
Who with songs of wine on the battle's eve
Thy drunken fancies thus relieve.
Here—bind the dog and let him be laid
In the stocks that are at my tent, said Saad.

In the stocks at Saad's all night sat he
With his happy thoughts for company.
He could see the stars as they slowly passed
On their nightly march in the universe vast,
And as they twinkled he thought that they
Were chanting some grand symphony alway.
He thought of the woman far away
In her father's tent with his baby boy,
And he gave his fancies rein to play
At will in verse—as all poets enjoy.
My son will be trained by her white haired sire
To guide the camel, to break the steed;
Her songs will his youthful thought inspire
With love of fame and heroic deed.
She will sing him my songs, and his childish brain
Like wax will receive and like marble retain,
To sing them to others when I 'neath the plain
With my sword and my shield in glory remain.

At dawn the Muzzins called Tecbir,
Which when the Mussulmans did hear
They prostrate toward the gilded East,
Their prayers recite, and beat their breast
For every sin that they confessed.

Then for a little all was calm,
When came the sentries' loud alarm;
Then on both sides were trumpets blown,
And loud, hoarse cries and shouts made known
The battle was begun;
And then long weary hours ran on.

Saad's wife, with infant at her breast,
Paced back and forth sadly distressed;
When came a soldier from the field,
Who thought ere night that they must yield;
Which hearing, Midjan thus broke forth:—

Oh, God of the universe
Lay not upon me this curse,
Here idly to sit while the foe
Of my people is laying them low;
Oh, woman release me I pray,
And this right arm will well repay
In thy husband's succor this day
The kindness thou showest to me.

By Allah I swear unto thee,
If not in the battle slain,
I will return here again
To resume my place in the stocks.
Then quickly the lock she unlocks,
Gave him horse, sword and armor of Saad's;
He while mounting with thanks her repaid,
And rode off to the battle alone.

At the door of her tent sat the woman
As the shades of evening fell;
When back from the field came Abou Midjan
Nigh spent, for he had fought well.
His horse and his arms smeared with blood and foam
Betokened a fearful strife.
Sick at heart she asked if Saad would come home,
Or if he had lost his life.

He is safe, unharmed and will soon be here,
Lock again the stocks ere he reappear.
It was late when grim Saad returned to his tent,
He was weary and sore and his strength was all spent;
Yet he kissed her and said it had been a hard day,
And when he had eaten he pictured the fray.

Cardesias battle will ever be known
As the day when doom fell on the old Persian throne;
The Persians outnumbered us four to our one,
Yet Allah be thanked for the fight we have won;
The battle was lost and I ready to yield
Until a bright angel appeared on the field;
Him, I saw on my horse with my arms and my sword,
Like a whirlwind he came as if sent by the Lord;
Before him both horses and riders went down;
If mortal, immortal would be his renown.
The horse seemed bedemoned and bit to destroy,
While the angel's bright sword was in rapid employ,
So it flashed back the sun like a mirror at play,
Till the eyes of the elephants blinked until they
Took fright and in panic wheeled, fled fast away,
Tramping thousands as rearward they made their mad way;
And the standard of Persia was trampled and torn,
And that nation forever is of its power shorn.

Then the woman arose and laid before Saad
The sword and the armor; red, red was the blade,
And the shield was all dented by many a blow
That the vanquished had dealt there ere they were laid low.
Then she led forth the horse all stiffened and sore,
Showed his back badly galled and his wounds all before;
And pointing to Abou said, there is the man.
Your angel from heaven who fought in the van
Of your army and saved it—was Abou Midjan.

METASTASIO.

Upon a glorious afternoon in Rome,
The warm sun shone, bathing the marvellous dome
Of San Pietro and the narrow streets,
Thronged with the varied costumes one there meets,
While blue Italian skies dazzled the eyes
With their perfection of cerulean dyes.
All in the joy of living children played
Their merry games; their parents in the shade
Rehearsed the doings of their youthful days.
Young men and maidens in love's glance expressed
The dawn of passion not as yet confessed,
But whose mysterious fires were lit within the breast

Un grand signore with his stately pace,
Came from the court, where he had won a case,
Passing Il Borgo Vecchio on his way.
Amidst the crowds we picture you to-day,
Pleased with his musings, when upon his ear
Fell a child's voice as music sweet and clear;
And turning he beheld a group entranced,
To whom a beautiful bright boy romanced
In verses improvised, whose melody
Was wonderful for one so young as he.
The scenes were pictured in dramatic way,
And with new measures each he did portray.

The lawyer stopped to listen and enjoy
The wondrous talent of the handsome boy,
Who, heeding not his presence, rolled along
To the conclusion of his tale in song.
Signor Gravina of an urchin there
Inquired who was the gifted lad, and where
He lived? To him the little child replied,
"His name's Pietro, in that shop reside
His parents, named Trapassi," who are old.
And now the children cheered, the tale was told.
They like the butterflies soon flew away
To taste new pleasures in their games of play.

Gravina called Pietro saying, "Son
Truly thou hast a gift, a wondrous one,
And a great pleasure hast thou given me
In listening to thy childish melody.
Let me reward thee with this little fee.
The boy looked at him with his grand black eyes,
Then answered to his infinite surprise,
And in his rhyme to him at once replied:—
"Che Ella scusi mi, mio onor
Non mi permette accettar favor."

It was a Roman's answer, and the more
Impressed Gravina than the song before.
"Oh! child of many graces, thou wouldst grace
The highest station with that lovely face;
Would'est not like to go to school and be
Fittingly trained to higher minstrelsy?"
"Oh yes, if that my parents will consent."
"Then let us ask it," and for that they went.

The parents watched the twain as they drew near,
And wondered what the query they would hear.
The velvet mantle and the silken hose.
And chain of gold with heavy golden seals,
The snow white hair and gravity of pose,
A man of substance to them clear reveals.

"Your son, I find, is a most gifted lad,
And if some years of schooling he but had
He would attain such prominence that he
Could then maintain you amidst luxury,
For he would fill the world with melody.
I have no child to gladden me at home;
Will you not share with me, and let him come
To live where he shall have great masters' care,
And soon reward them with his talents rare?"

They were impressed with manner and demeanor.
What answer should they give Signor Gravina?
The old man to his wife, "Dite, Carina,"
And she replied, "E volonta divina,
Che sia anche la mia."
The world to good Gravina owes its thanks,
For his good deed that day. Pietro's pranks,
Gravina's home made bright,
And in his progress he took great delight.
One day he said, "Pietro change thy name,
As Metastasio be known to fame."

Oh child of sunny fortunes, upon thee
The Muses and the Graces lavishly
Have heaped their gifts, and fortune gifts thee, too;
Just as Gravina loved thee, all shall do.

Gravina dead and buried, it was found,
Had left Pietro all his fortune round;
Who quickly spent it with companions gay
In a mad whirl of pleasure night and day.
Well knew Gravina that when it was gone
Necessity would spur him back to song,
And his experience would last him long;
For, in his culture and ability,
He owned a fund could not expended be;
But would grow with the using constantly.
So when the day of wakening came at last
Pietro shivered in the cruel blast,
Blighted all friendships with companions gay,
Who from his company now drew away.
That drove him to exile himself from Rome,
And he at Napoli sought a new home.

At Napoli he found Gravina's friend,
Who heard his story, to its bitter end;
He would employ him in his studio,
Would he but vow all verses to forego.
"Verses don't pay." Mankind from age to age
Like parrots quote this senseless false adage.
It was a bitter pill no doubt to swallow;
He swallowed it, for he was very hollow;
And since it was a precedent for more,
He did as other poets had before.
So destiny decrees and we obey
Throughout life's dream much in the mole's blind way.
To gain a pittance he each day pored o'er
Huge musty volumes of their ancient law,
And wrote off dreary contracts by the score.

Among their clients was the high viceroy.
He one day filled Pietro's heart with joy;
He was the messenger whom destiny
Sent to unlock the poet's treasury,
And give his talents the long golden reign
Gravina had foreseen they would attain.

The viceroy, having sent for him one day,
Received him in a very courtly way,
And plunged "in medias res" without delay:—
"I purpose here next month to celebrate
Her gracious majesty's, the queen's, birthday,
By a great fête, and would then dedicate
To her some stirring ode or classic play;
I have been told your talent can produce
A work fitting to grace her fame and name.
I forthwith bid you let your genius loose,
And you shall have reward and gain great fame."

Pietro pleaded—feebly, it is true—
His promise to the lawyer verse to shun.
A king's command all promises undo
If counter to his pleasure they may run;
"So get you gone, sir poet, and obey
The royal mandate given you to-day."

Pietro turned not to his work again,
Tumultuous were the workings of his brain;
He wandered far along by the glad sea
That dances to the sun at Napoli.
He looked up at that world famed glorious sky,
And saw the white clouds o'er Vesuvio fly;
He saw Inarime's soft bloom afar,
Where widowed lived the saintly Colonna.
There dreamed he till the golden sun went down
Beneath the waters of that glorious sea.
Then from his brow was gone that long day's frown,
For golden apples of Esperidi
Fell down before him for his first great theme.

Each day on "La Spiaggia" he lay,
Bathed in the golden sunshine, drinking in
The glorious tints and colors of that bay;
And in the night from his day dreams would spin
The meshes of his most delightful play.

The evening came, the curtain rose upon
Fair orchard lawns of the Esperidi;
There on the trees the golden apples hung,
While midst the branches feathered songsters sung,
And sparkling fountains lent their witchery.
The air was laden with a sweet perfume
From fragrant spice vines heavy with their bloom,
While bowers of flowers at intervals were seen,
Adding their colors to the charming scene.
Italian colors had been well employed
To grace this picture which the court enjoyed.
Now, while they gazed, an unseen choir began
A vestal choral—soft, adagio,
Through which one voice in syncopations ran
Midst trills and cadences, as if to show
Its wondrous power and flexibility.
Now, sostenuto, while the vestals sang,
Higher and sweeter that one note long rang—
Then through the octaves ran its birdlike flight.
With plaudits long the queen showed her delight.
Then a procession filed across the stage,
Still chanting their sweet hymn of love and praise.
And last the wondrous singer, with a page
On either side, who peacock fans upraised
To shield her from the sun's too glaring rays.

Our Metastasio was standing there,
Watching the interest that his work inspired.
And when he saw this woman, wondrous fair,
Matchless in grace. so classic'ly attired
In simple Grecian robe and flowing veil,
He felt his work from her new grace acquired,
And all the critics would in vain assail.
Of a bystander, he inquired her name.
"Signora Bulgarelli; but to fame
La Romanina is her preferred name."

That night they met; Romans, both young, both fair,
Truly a gifted and ideal pair.
If ever music, poetry and song,
Drew two enraptured mortals on to bliss,
These two upon love's tide were borne along;
They cared not whither, while 'twas sweet like this.
It was an enervating atmosphere,
A mad delirium of sensual joy.
Poet and artist therein disappear,
Later to reappear, e'en love will cloy.
An episode to him; she it consumed.
"The hind that would be mated by the lion,
Must die for love," so sang the Bard of Avon.

Through these three years he inspiration drew
From sweet companionship with her, and he
Each month emitted some production new
That the world welcomed with avidity.
Her mellow tones, as they intoned his rhyme,
Gave added sweetness to his honeyed words.
His fame flew over Europe in brief time
Upon the wings of merit like the birds.

One morn he came to her holding a letter
A messenger had brought him from Vienna,
Conferring honors and what he thought better,
An annual pension, yet with this dilemma—
To be the Poet Laureate of Austria,
Was a distinction not to be resisted.
"Ma come lasciarti, Marianna mia?"
"Vada, bel idol mio," she insisted.
And so they parted; he to higher honors.
And she to wither and descend in fame.
He met warm welcome from imperial donors,
While she, till now called "Diva," lost the name.

The pleasure loving people of Vienna
Courted and fêted him; he gave them pleasure.
They loaded him with gifts beyond all measure,
And a fair countess made of him her treasure.
She took him to her palace. There he dwelt with her
In luxury, while each new month producing
Other new works, to honors new conducing.
Kings, queens, grand dukes rich jewels to him sent,
And there to four score years he lived content.
He was the father of our opera.
What higher honors could one hope to wear?

Much like Gravina's was to be his end,
He left a vaster fortune to a friend.

How often in his years of triumph he
Must have remembered him of Napoli,
And at remembrance smiled sarcastic'ly,
"Verses don't pay"—Don't they?

MAY 4 1903

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 021 929 835 3